



Office for Victims of Crime

OVC Fact Sheet

Advocating for the Fair

Treatment of Crime Victims

Initiatives to Combat Child Abuse

Background

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), in collaboration with other Office of Justice Programs (OJP) agencies, and public and private interest groups and agencies, administers funding to programs that develop strategies, discuss issues, and make recommendations to prevent and combat child abuse. In forming partnerships with other government agencies and organizations, OVC pools resources and support in order to develop new alternatives and directions for resolving child abuse. For example, OVC has joined together with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to target family violence in Indian Country. OVC also collaborates with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services to address these issues. OVC grants finance efforts by communities to create and adopt locally responsive approaches that encourage collaboration among all sectors. Sectors include victim service providers, victims' advocates, law enforcement authorities, health care providers, and community organizations representing educators, businesses, and others involved in the fight to end child abuse.

Funding

OVC's funding is based on the Crime Victims Fund, which is derived, not from tax dollars, but from fines and penalties paid by Federal criminal offenders. Nearly 90 percent of the money collected each year, \$363 million in 1997, is distributed as formula grant programs to States to assist in funding their victim assistance and compensation programs. The other portion is placed in a discretionary fund that assists Federal crime victims and supports

training and technical assistance programs or demonstration projects that can be used as models of "promising practice." Since 1988, OVC has distributed over \$2 billion to the States to support victim services and compensation.

VOCA Victim Assistance Program

(Formula Grants to the States)

Through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), OVC funds the VOCA Victim Assistance Program which provides funding to nearly 3,000 local victim programs and services nationwide. These programs offer victims a wide range of services, including crisis counseling, criminal justice advocacy, and shelter. To date, using fiscal year 1997 funds, States have funded 1,445 child physical abuse programs and 1,717 child sexual abuse programs which received a total of \$31,899,331. In addition, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) programs are eligible to receive VOCA funding to support services they provide to child victims of neglect and/or abandonment.

Discretionary Fund Initiatives

The following initiatives show the collaborative commitment from OVC, OJP agencies, and other Federal agencies and organizations to building and strengthening the response of communities nationwide to end child abuse. Many of the products produced from these and other OVC grants can be obtained through the OVC Resource Center, a national information clearinghouse.

Young Teenaged Girls Sexually Victimized by Older Men: Improving the Criminal Justice Response

American Bar Association

OVC awarded funds to the American Bar Association (ABA) Commission on Children and the Law to examine the way the criminal justice system handles statutory rape cases and identifies promising practices. The Commission also is developing a compendium, with specific guidance for prosecutors, victim advocates, law enforcement officers, and judges to help young teenaged girls who are victims in these types of cases.

Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

With the support of OVC and the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Family Violence Project of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges will develop a set of recommended guidelines on intervening in domestic violence and child abuse cases. The grantee will compile materials from promising programs and provide that information to a multidisciplinary committee of national experts on the subject, which will meet several times to develop the guidelines. Guidelines will be used by child protective services staff, law enforcement, attorneys, courts, family preservation agencies, and battered women's programs.

Safe Kids/Safe Streets: Community-Based Approaches to Intervening in Child Abuse and Neglect

OVC, with additional support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, and the Violence Against Women Grants Office, supports the Child Safe Project. The project will coordinate efforts of Federal, State, and local resources to develop a comprehensive prevention and intervention program for child victims and their families. OJP by "acknowledging the correlation between child abuse and neglect and later violent delinquency and the need to improve system response, set out to create a single program aimed at helping to break the cycle of early childhood victimization and later juvenile or adult criminality." The goal of this 5-year OJP-wide program is to create systemic reforms to improve services for abused children;

provide training and technical assistance support to practitioners who service child victims and their families; strengthen a continuum of family support services to assure that assessment, counseling, and victim assistance services are available; assure the uniformity of evaluation protocols across sites; and provide prevention education and public information. OVC is providing the grantees of this program with training, technical assistance, and training materials on improving services for child victims. Assistance focuses on expanding the availability of medical services to sexually and physically abused children and mentoring or training programs for communities wishing to establish a Children's Advocacy Center.

The Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities (CJA)

Since 1989, OVC has provided funding through the Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities (CJA). These funds are used to assist American Indian Tribes in developing, establishing, and operating programs to improve the investigation, prosecution, and handling of child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim. The goal of the CJA grant program is to improve the capacity of existing tribal systems to handle serious child abuse cases by developing specialized services and procedures to address the needs of Native American child victims. The program also focuses on developing strategies to handle cases of child sexual abuse from the initial disclosure, through the investigation and prosecution, to case resolution in an effective and timely manner. The following is a list of initiatives that are funded under CJA. To learn more about these programs, please refer to the OVC fact sheet about the CJA program which describes each of the tribal grants.

- **Children's Justice Act Discretionary Grant Program, Child Abuse Detection and Prosecution**
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska
- **Training and Technical Assistance for the Children's Justice Act (CJA)**
National Indian Justice Center, Inc., Petaluma, CA
- **Children's Advocacy Centers in Indian Country**
Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center
- **Tribal/Federal Judges Training**
Northern Plains Tribal Judicial Institute

- **Northern Cheyenne Tribe**
Lame Deer, Montana
- **Pueblo of Laguna**
Laguna, New Mexico
- **Western District of Washington**
Seattle, Washington
- **District of Minnesota**
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dissemination of Information and Materials

OVC prepares and disseminates information through the OVC Resource Center regarding services to victims of Federal crime. OVC has helped produce a number of information resources, including videotapes, brochures, and resource packages. Some of these include the following:

- Resource Package for Children Required to Testify in Federal Court.
- “B. J.” Learns About Federal and Tribal Court—a video.
- Financial Assistance for Crime Victims—a video.
- Inside Federal Court—a video.
- Bitter Earth: Child Sexual Abuse in Indian Country—a video.
- Young Once, Indian Forever—a video.
- Learning All About Court with “B.J.!”—an activity book.

District-Specific Training Program

The District-Specific Training Program is an ongoing effort to improve the response of Federal criminal justice personnel to the rights and needs of crime victims in Indian Country. Combined with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), OVC has supported the development of regional trainings in Indian Country focusing on family violence and the unique needs of victims in remote areas. OVC has provided funding and personnel support—including scholarships to participants—for diverse conferences such as the Four Corners Indian Country Conference, Great Lakes Indian Country Conference, Northwest Regional Indian Country Conference, and Midwest Region Indian Country Conference.

Tribal Court Appointed Special Advocate Programs(CASA)

OVC funds CASA programs in Indian Country. The funding has supported four demonstration programs, attendance of CASA staff at the National CASA conference, training and technical assistance, and development of guidelines for all 14 tribal CASA programs.

Interagency Agreement with Indian Health Services

OVC is working with the Indian Health Service and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Wyoming to provide support for a child psychologist to conduct forensic interviews at an approved child advocacy center in Indian Country, to provide supportive services to child victims of abuse (sexual and physical) whose cases may proceed through either Federal or Tribal court, and to provide training and support services as necessary, to other U.S. Attorney Offices in the contiguous districts.

Children’s Advocacy Centers (CAC)

National Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers

OVC joined with OJJDP and the National Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers to (1) develop a program demonstrating comprehensive, multidisciplinary “state-of-the-art” medical services for child victims living in rural areas; (2) produce a videotape that enhances CAC efforts to improve collaboration with domestic violence advocates in better serving children and their parents; and (3) provide training and technical assistance through a mentoring program with an emphasis on establishing a children’s advocacy center.

National Symposium on Child Sexual Abuse

Each year, OVC supports the participation of teams of Federal criminal justice personnel nominated by U.S. Attorneys’ Offices to attend to the National Symposium on Child Sexual Abuse in Huntsville, Alabama.

Child Victim Assistance Demonstration Program

United States Attorneys Office for the District of Columbia

OVC and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys are supporting a specialized child victim assistance multidisciplinary center program in the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the District of Columbia. The multidisciplinary center coordinates services and implements a joint interview/assessment process and specialized services for child

victims. A range of program implementation and informational materials, including *Child Victims and Witnesses: A Handbook for Criminal Justice Professionals*, have been developed and distributed to professionals from other programs who work with child victims. The program will continue to develop these kinds of resources as well as offer training and mentoring services to other sites wishing to replicate the program or develop similar services for child victims.

For Further Information

For information about Federal funding available in your State, please contact the agency designated by the Gover-

nor to administer the VOCA Victim Assistance Program. In many cases, the same agency has been designated to administer VAWA funding. A list of these contacts is available on the OVC Web Site.

More information about the Office for Victims of Crime is available through the following sources:

OVC 202-307-5983
OVC Web Site <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>
OVC Resource Center 800-627-6872
OVC Resource Center Web Site <http://www.ncjrs.org>

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<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>
for the latest information on
Victims Issues.